

VZCZCXRO2980
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH
DE RUEHGP #0725/01 0680459
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 090459Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9078
RUEAHL/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2110
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1600
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 3822
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5285
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1260
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 5956
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 6351

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 SINGAPORE 000725

SIPDIS

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

FOR SECRETARY CHERTOFF FROM AMBASSADOR HERBOLD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [KCRM](#) [EFIN](#) [SN](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR SECRETARY CHERTOFF'S VISIT TO
SINGAPORE

11. (SBU) I warmly welcome your March 28-30 visit to Singapore and look forward to introducing you to Singapore's leadership. The bilateral relationship is at an historic high point and your visit offers tremendous opportunities to move it further forward, particularly in law enforcement cooperation, trade security, money laundering/terrorist finance controls, and counterterrorism. The other U.S. Ambassadors to Southeast Asian countries and I are confident that our roundtable with you will show us ways to strengthen further the positive and multifaceted working relationships between the Department of Homeland Security and our missions in the field.

Singapore Leadership

12. (SBU) Singapore's senior leadership highly values the U.S.-Singapore relationship and is pleased that you have chosen to stop here. You will meet with all the top leaders: Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong, Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs Wong Kan Seng, and Deputy Prime Minister and Co-Ordinating Minister for Security and Defence

13. Jayakumar. Important messages for your calls are: encouraging Singapore to deepen our law enforcement cooperation and share financial information; noting our interest in working together to improve trade security and strengthen Singapore's anti-money laundering and terrorist finance controls; and thanking Singapore for its counterterrorism cooperation.

-- PM Lee has been in office for more than a year and a half after 14 years as Deputy Prime Minister. He will be interested in discussing the terrorist threat and U.S. engagement with the rest of the region. He may be on the verge of calling an early election, which he will win handily.

-- SM Goh was Prime Minister from 1990-2004. An affable but firm leader, he is a strong supporter of close ties with the United States and views our regional presence as essential to peace and security. Goh is concerned about the rise of radical Islam in Southeast Asia and encourages moderates to stand up.

-- MM Lee is modern Singapore's founding father (as well as father of PM Lee Hsien Loong) and was Prime Minister for over

three decades. He will engage in a strategic review of terrorism, regional developments, and the rise of China.

-- DPM Wong, your counterpart, has a strong law and order reputation and a firm grasp on the internal security agencies. He will want to discuss counter-terrorism and law enforcement cooperation, as well as the implications of opening casinos here in 2009.

-- DPM Jayakumar oversees GOS efforts to improve inter-agency coordination to deal with the terrorist threat in Singapore.

Strategic Partners, not Allies

13. (SBU) Our excellent relationship with Singapore is founded on a convergence of views on key strategic issues and substantial trade and investment ties. Singapore views a strong U.S. diplomatic, military, and economic presence in the region as essential to regional peace and prosperity. Singapore is a valuable logistics hub for U.S. forces and seeks greater interoperability with us, highlighted by its recent selection of the F-15SG for its Next Generation Fighter. To expand our strong security ties, President Bush and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong signed the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA) last July. As with our two-year old Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the SFA is designed to make a good relationship even better. To preserve its autonomy and credibility with its neighbors, however, Singapore limits its closeness to us. It specifically does not want to be a treaty ally: our military leases facilities from the GOS -- there are no U.S. "bases" on the island.

SINGAPORE 00000725 002 OF 003

Terrorism

14. (SBU) The GOS's greatest fear is a terrorist attack in Singapore -- a trophy target -- due to the economic damage it would cause and the impact on race relations in this multi-ethnic society. Singapore has been a reliable and highly capable partner in the Global War on Terrorism. In 2001, the GOS uncovered a plot by Jemaah Islamiya to bomb targets in Singapore, including this mission. Singapore continues to view itself as a high-profile terrorist target and the GOS regularly warns its citizens that a terrorist attack is inevitable. Singapore's leaders are concerned about the growth of radical Islam in Southeast Asia and the long-term threat to secular authority in neighboring countries.

Law Enforcement Cooperation

15. (SBU) Law enforcement cooperation is good, but could be much better. We want to conclude a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) to raise our cooperation to a level commensurate with our close ties and Singapore's status as a highly-developed economy and important financial center. Singapore is willing to share information quietly through intelligence channels, but is much less forthcoming through law enforcement channels. The GOS does not want information it provides to become public, such as in a U.S. court proceeding. Singapore has statutory restrictions on sharing data from financial records, which hinders cooperation with the USG. We are working to address shortcomings in Singapore's anti-money laundering and terrorist finance controls. These issues will be even more important once casinos open in 2009. DPM Wong will be responsible for casino regulation.

Border Controls

16. (SBU) As you will see when you visit the Immigration and

Checkpoints Authority operations at Woodlands Checkpoint, Singapore has effective and efficient border controls. It is a leader in adopting high-tech solutions for cargo and passenger screening and is in the forefront for biometric passports. Singapore is strengthening its legislation to prosecute citizens who misuse their passports for alien smuggling or other purposes. The GOS is evaluating our proposal to share terrorist lookout information under Homeland Security Presidential Directive-6. The GOS has been working with Interpol and the embassy to develop mechanisms for sharing Lost and Stolen Passport (LASP) information.

Trade Security and Non-Proliferation

17. (SBU) Singapore strongly supports the United States, global non-proliferation agenda and trade security initiatives. It was the first country in the region to join the Container Security Initiative and the Megaports Initiative, and participates enthusiastically in the Proliferation Security Initiative. Singapore recognizes its own interests in controlling trade in dangerous goods, and in 2003 it instituted a new strategic goods control law that imposes controls on a range of sensitive goods and technology, including transshipment cargoes. Since the passing of the law, bilateral cooperation on counterproliferation has improved, and Singapore has made an effort to improve its own enforcement efforts through strengthened regulations, extensive training for its customs and checkpoints officials, and cooperation with other countries, including the United States.

18. (U) While these measures are a vast improvement, the legal framework provided by Singapore's strategic goods control law still falls short of international best practices and has hindered efforts to improve law enforcement cooperation on proliferation matters. Singapore does not yet adhere to key multilateral control regimes such as the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Australia Group, and only controls a

SINGAPORE 00000725 003 OF 003

subset of the items covered by these regimes. Singapore also does not collect manifest data on transshipment (80 percent of the containers passing through the port) or transit shipments, unless they are bound for the United States.

19. (SBU) Singapore acknowledges these weaknesses, and in October 2005, the United States and Singapore held a bilateral dialogue on improving our counterproliferation cooperation. As a result, we have agreed to pursue an aggressive training program for Singapore Customs and security officials aimed at improving their ability to understand, recognize, and control strategic goods.

HERBOLD